

East Coast Worker 2

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PRICE 10 cents

Who is Judge Green?

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This gruelling work brings in wages of \$45 per week at the sweat shop known as General Instruments in Sydney.

PRAIRIE FIRE
NORTHERN CROWN BUILDING
REGINA SASK.



Trenton lies on 'lost orders' Steelworkers in uphill fight

BY ALAN STORY

The Trenton Steel management is at it again. By resorting to the foulest of lies about "cancelled orders", the company hopes to brow-beat their striking workers into submission. But Trenton workers haven't been fooled yet in their eight week strike and are still holding strong.

In Friday's Chronicle-Herald, correspondent Rae Foshay wrote that "the company this week received cancellations of over \$700,000 worth of business for axles, wheel pairs, some fabrications, forgings and machine work... as a direct result of the strike."

She reported that 2,000 orders for wheel pairs for Marine Industries in Sorel, Quebec had been lost by Trenton to National Steel Car in Hamilton.

The East Coast Worker was suspicious. We checked out the story with National Car. It is a bald-faced lie.

In a telephone interview Saturday July 31, National Car president Tom Rahilly said from Hamilton he knew nothing about the transfer of the wheel pairs order to his company.

"I wish we were getting it but we're not," he said.

National Car is on "vacation shut-down" until August 17 and couldn't have taken the order anyway.

This "company leak" is the latest in a campaign started even before the strike began. It is the creation of a black-hearted publicity department and the Trenton management which wants the men to return to work for a lousy settlement and start producing profits again for the shareholders over in Britain.

The first "legal" strike at Trenton since 1943 began on June 10. It pits Local 1231 of the United Steelworkers of America against the Hawker Siddeley Group Ltd. of England.

This international heavy manufacturing and transportation empire has 98,000 employees in 200 companies around the world. In Nova Scotia it owns the two biggest factories on the mainland — Halifax Shipyards and the Trenton Car and Steel Works. Its steel plant at Sydney was "provincialized" in 1967 by the Nova Scotia government.

Negotiations before the strike began lasted more than four months. The union reduced their original demands four times to their present position of 97.2 cents, including welfare and pensions plans, over two years.

In return the company made a stingy initial offer of 15 cents on the base rate for the first year, eight cents per hour for the first six months of the second year and seven cents for the last six months. After four months of negotiating the company offer was increased two cents spread over two years and they would move no further.

The Trenton base rate is \$2.36 per hour.

WAGES NOT ONLY ISSUE

Wages are not the only issue in the dispute. "The company has refused almost all contract language changes because they know they have the upper hand. This is quite evident by the great number of grievances lost over past years," said local president Charles Wallace.

Over the past few years previous "hat

in hand" leadership had also allowed the men of Trenton to fall further and further behind in wages. When June 10 came, 1400 steelworkers of Trenton planned to show management that they had enough backsliding.

Since the strike began, there has been one set of negotiations on July 5 and 6. The union and company are still 44 cents apart.

The Department of Labour has appointed an industrial inquiry commission

under Truro lawyer Lorne Clarke but none of the men are expecting too much from him. Such inquiries have never been a friend of working people.

As could be expected, the Trenton management is making all kinds of trumped up, and deliberately misleading, charges about the union demands.

General manager J. Grant Mitchell says his company pays "wages comparable to, and in most cases, higher than

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Green is the bosses' judge

"The problem with Green is that he is still living in the nineteenth century. He still thinks that an extra nickel is a big pile of money to give to workers. But he thinks nothing of charging \$50 or \$70 an hour for his own services."

A Nova Scotia trade unionist was talking about Judge Nathan Green, this province's Mister Industrial Inquirer. Last summer's Canso fishermen strike, the spring '71 Halifax City Workers strike, the recent Hotel Nova Scotian strike and seven more disputes in the past four years — Nate Green is a busy (and prosperous) guy. The question is: busy on whose side?

Industrial Inquiries, like conciliation and arbitration boards, are set up by the labour department to help mediate union-management disputes, usually strikes. Inquiry commissioners, like Green, are supposed to listen to both sides, decide impartially which side is right and recommend a settlement which is fair.

WHAT IS GREEN'S RECORD?

Let's look at the Green record as an industrial inquiry commissioner. During the Canso dispute, Green sat and listened to stories of what working without a union meant. Fishermen told of constantly working on dangerous, leaky and unseaworthy ships, of men's fingers being cut off and then bandaged with a dirty rag, of workers cheated out of part of their catch by the company.

Then he turned around and told them



Nate Green

to go back to work without a union contract.

Another "Green Report" was used against workers at the Hotel Nova Scotian who had put forward the completely reasonable demand that since they are federal employees, they should be getting the federal minimum wage. Both CN and the union stuck to their guns for nine months. Enter Nate Green to try to settle the dispute.

With his "an extra nickel is a big pile of money" attitude, he somehow decided that Nova Scotian employees should get less than the minimum. A brief strike followed but the workers had to settle for less than their just demands.

CITY WORKERS BETRAYED

A third prominent dispute he was involved with at the same time was the Halifax City Workers strike. In pre-strike bargaining, the union demanded a 40% wage increase over two years and the city replied with a puny 12% offer over the same time period. At the peak of their four week strike and with citizen support increasing every day, the workers went back to the job with the promise of a "fair hearing" and a "good offer" from an industrial inquiry commission.

It didn't happen. Judge Green recommended an offer of about 18% for the members of CUPE 108, close to the city's original offer. Very little had been gained.

108 local president Charley MacDougall, who had been confident that the union would get a fair deal from the

inquiry commission, was shocked when the report came out.

"I don't believe it. There's no doubt the union was able to prove its point to the commission. I don't think even Judge Green doubts the union is right yet he makes recommendations like this. Judge Green is supposed to be social minded."

SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED

But should MacDougall really be surprised by this "Green Report"? Should any worker be surprised? For industrial inquiries and the men who head them, like Nate Green, Lorne Clarke and Ian MacKeigan, are not "fair", are not neutral, are not friends of the working man or woman. They are friends of big business and government.

Green, Clarke and MacKeigan are all lawyers and have worked most closely with the business class all their lives. All three attended Dalhousie Law School, the main training school for Nova Scotia's political and judicial "elite". Other "famous grads" include Bob Stanfield, Ike Smith, Gerry Regan, John Buchanan, Chief Justice Cowan.

After work, these people get together at the same exclusive clubs. At the Halifax Club, member Nate Green is likely to meet men such as Merlin Nunn (lawyer for Acadia Fisheries and the City of Halifax during the recent strike), H.P. Conner the codfish baron from National Sea, Frank Sobeys the grocery store magnate, and R. B. Cameron

CAN'T BE NEUTRAL

Ruling class education, ruling class clubs, and ruling class friends make it impossible for Nate Green, Clarke, and MacKeigan to be neutral. In union-management disputes, they naturally side with the group of people they went through school with, work with, and have a drink with after hours.

As lawyers, these three inquiry commissioners see their first duty as upholding the law above all else. It's not surprising. Members of their class such as Stanfield, Smith and Regan made the laws to protect their own interests and the property and profits of other business and industrial owners. Against these laws, the rights of workers don't count for much.

MUST BE SUSPICIOUS

The working class movement must be very suspicious of the reasons for calling each inquiry commission. Many have already learned the hard way that such commissions do not win a strike. Government intervention cannot replace picket line militancy and solidarity. Workers should not go back to work just because an inquiry commission is called. The Halifax City Workers, for example, found that trading a winning strike for hollow promises of a "fair deal" destroyed their power and bargaining position.

DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN

Like the city workers also discovered, as soon as a commissioner comes down with his report favourable to the employer, a deliberately created campaign puts pressure from the employer, the government and the newspapers on the union to accept the recommendations.

We must not get backed into a corner by an unfair report and the propaganda that comes with it. We must come out fighting against both.

The government, the newspapers, the companies and the inquiry commissioners all claim that inquiries and conciliation boards are double-edged swords: they cut both ways. Workers are beginning to realize that the edge that points towards them is the only one that's sharp.

Bolivian tin miners fight for socialism

Last month in Plaza Murillo, in front of the government palace, President Torres was ready with his speech. The twenty thousand workers, however, were there not to listen but to tell Torres where they stood. The workers chanted the popular slogans of "The people armed, the people respected!" and "Long live socialist Bolivia; death to the fascist coup!" Torres began his speech: "In this very historic square I promised my people a government of the people when I assumed office last October 7 . . ."

The workers interrupted repeatedly: "Arms yes! Promises no!"

The workers insisted: "Socialism!"

"Beginning tomorrow," continued Torres, "we will meet with the leaders of the workers, universities, peasants, and progressive intellectuals in order to study the active participation of the people in the center of government. We will produce a Bolivian government for Bolivians."

"Workers to power!" The mass gathering repeated.

This historic yet uneasy meeting between the Bolivian working class and the newly-installed president Torres clearly showed that as far as the masses were concerned socialism is on the immediate agenda for this South American Country.

Torres had been trying to hold together a government which had members from the reactionary ruling class and from the working class. The ruling class had tried to overthrow Torres because of some of his anti-American policies and he was now forced to rely on the working class for support in resisting the attempted coup. Yet the working class wasn't about to support him without a commit-

ment to socialism.

In recent Bolivian history there have been three main political groups who have fought for political power. The struggle began when the nationalists — capitalists who wanted Bolivians to control their own economy — came to power in 1952, with the aid of the workers.

The nationalists remained in power until 1964 when the pro-American capitalists staged an overthrow with the aid of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. These reactionary members of the ruling class came to power in order to viciously repress a series of strikes by the miners.

TORRES NEEDS WORKERS

A reign of terror which included the suppression of the revolutionary guerillas led by Che Guevara in 1967 lasted until late 1969 when the nationalist government of Torres came to power. However, Torres has only been able to retain power with the aid of the socialist worker who have prevented a number of attempted overthrows by the U.S. — supported ruling class capitalists.

Leading the fight for Bolivian working class socialism are the tin miners. Among the most class-conscious and political workers in the world they serve as the rallying point for the urban poor, industrial workers, and radical students. Because tin is the most important natural resource in Bolivia when the tin miners act as a group and walk off the job they can nearly paralyze the whole nation.

When news of the attempted overthrow of Torres broke in late June the tin miners meeting with other socialist groups in the country to try and build a

socialist working class party. They immediately decided to support Torres although they were very critical of him for not getting rid of these reactionaries in the beginning.

Instructions were sent out for workers to organize an armed militia to prevent the takeover by the capitalists. Trade union halls throughout the country were turned into militia recruiting centers where commando groups of 15 to 20 men were organized. A national workers military command was set up responsible only to the popular assembly of the socialist groups. This command included a miner, a railroad worker, a factory worker, a construction worker, a truck driver, a farmer and a university student.

The first act of the popular assembly of the socialist groups was to call for a general strike to paralyze the nation in case the reactionaries tried to overthrow the government.

By early July the demonstrations, rallies, the threatened general strike, and the arming of the workers forced the capitalists who were behind the attempted overthrow to call off the coup. Yet the miners and other workers are not satisfied. They know that Torres still supports capitalism and that his government still contains some reactionary ruling class people.

The government of president Torres remains very shaky especially in the face of the strong upsurge in the power and popularity of the socialist forces. A socialist worker's government with the radical tin miners in the forefront seems not too far off in the future. (compiled from Monthly Review and the Guardian)

In the following interview Edison Lumsden, UFAWU organizer in Canso, gives an up-to-date report about the shutdown of Acadia Fisheries announced two weeks ago, and tells how the people of Canso have reacted to yet another blow in their struggle for the right to work and the right to live.

East Coast Worker: It has been claimed by some of the media that the UFAWU strike last year is the major cause in the shutdown of the Acadia Fisheries plant in Canso. Do you think this charge is fair?

Edison Lumsden: No, I in no way think it's fair, or true. If Cadegan hadn't been so arrogant, if he'd recognized the UFAWU last year, then all this trouble would have been avoided. But even so, the seven month strike last year wasn't what put the plant behind \$111,000.00 in back taxes to the Town of Canso, and \$2,000,000.00 to the Bank of Montreal, and \$200,000.00 to Irving Oil. They did that all by themselves, through mismanagement, or poor management.

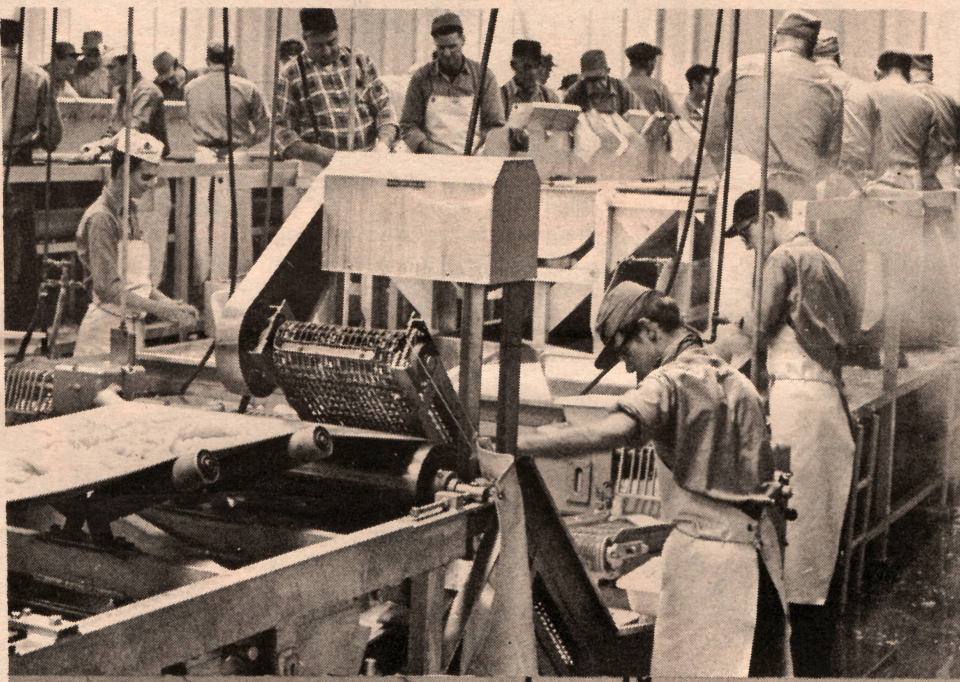
ECW: Do people in Canso feel that the strike last year forced the plant closure?

Lumsden: Well, some people have this idea and some don't. Most of those who do feel this way are the people who have been bucking the UFAWU ever since it came in here. There's a few of the (Town) Council, and the bosses at Acadia Fisheries, and the church workers that were against Ron Parsons. But for the rank and file, the workmen, I don't think they blame the UFAWU.

ECW: What is the general feeling in Canso about the shut-down?

Lumsden: Well, you've got a sort of divided feeling here in a way. Most of the Seafood (plant) workers are taking it in their stride the same as ourselves. We in no way like to see anything like this. But what can you do under the present circumstances when you have a company down here, and a management, that don't give a damn about the people in this town, or in the community as a whole?

UFAWU on shutdown



ECW: How long do you think the plant is going to be shut down?

Lumsden: Well, this is hard to say right now. At the present time we can't find out who the Government's negotiating with so it's hard to say how long the plant will be closed. I do know this, though, that if the Government looks into this matter the way they did our matter — the strike last year and the raid (by the CFAWU) this year — well then I can see the plant being closed down for quite some time.

ECW: What do you think should be done about the shut-down of the plant?

Lumsden: Well, I think the Government — if they can't get another company to come in here — should come in themselves. In fact, the UFAWU has been after the Government for the past year to take

over this plant, the same as it did at Dosco, and let the people of Nova Scotia run it. This should have been done long ago. This is what I think the Government should do. Before they bring in a foreign company anyway. We've had enough foreign companies around here.

ECW: What will happen to the town and people of Canso if the fish plant is closed for a long time, or if it never re-opens?

Lumsden: Well, I shouldn't say it'll never re-open again. It's just a matter of who and how long. But the people in Canso can't stand this too much longer, not with the straits they've been going through this past year. Not only UFAWU members, but Seafood workers too. It's pretty bad when people who were born and brought up in this small town have to move out to try and make a living.

ECW: Are there any concrete plans among members of the community to organize protests against the plant closure?

Lumsden: No, there's been no demonstrations planned yet by the UFAWU, and none by the Seafood workers. Their local is just waiting to see what the negotiations are going to bring about. We'll see if they're going to get someone to come in here or not. Then, I dare say, if they can't get anyone to come in after negotiations, there could be some pressure mounted with the combined effort of the UFAWU and the Seafood workers together.

ECW: How do the UF fishermen feel about having their jobs taken away from them by the CFAW, particularly in light of the fact that it was UFAWU members who won trade union recognition for fishermen in the first place?

Lumsden: They say the CF has a union. Well, I don't think the CF has any union. It never did have here in Canso. They have a union alright, but only by name, because Mr. Cadegan here gave them voluntary recognition. The CF still hasn't proven to the people here in Canso, or Nova Scotia as far as I'm concerned, that they do have a union. We did, in fact prove that we had the membership here. The fishermen around here don't want the CF. They're UF all the way, and they always will be. And the only way the CF will ever live down this way is through Government decisions — like the one the Labour Relations Board made (to certify CFAWU).

ECW: Finally, Edison, does the UF plan to go on organizing fishermen in Nova Scotia?

Lumsden: Yes, we still plan to go ahead and organize. There's no question about that. We've been here since '67. The UFAWU on the West Coast sent their organizers here to do a job, and we don't figure that that job is anywhere near complete. We're far from being finished. We got a long, long ways to go yet.

Nfld. workers take on companies

"This is not just a fight in Burgeo . . . this is a fight to change the system that has kept Newfoundland down for centuries . . . somebody else decides what you're going to be paid, how many hours you will work, when you will start and when you will stop on a take it or leave it basis . . . and you're supposed to be grateful. Being grateful is being exploited."

Newfoundland lawyer, politician and rebel Rick Cashin was speaking to the Burgeo fish plant workers about the significance of their strike. It is one of four major and long strikes in Newfoundland now being fought by working people.

The Burgeo struggle is quite similar to our own fishermen's strike in Canso. It is a company town on the isolated southern coast. One man, Spencer Lake, owns the only industry, controls the bait, owns all the trawlers, most of the stores and has been mayor for 10 years.

It is against this dictatorship that members of the Newfoundland Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers Union started fighting on June 4 when the strike began.

The union was certified as the bargaining agent for the 205 employees earlier this spring but Lake refuses to recognize it. "I'm not anti-union," says Lake. "I just think that in certain circumstances unions are not practical, and this is one of them. You haven't the local leadership to run them intelligently, with all due respect to the people — I'm very fond of them."

When plant workers established a mili-

tant picket line, Lake sailed in workers by boat. This tactic was blocked by a line of moored boats and a militant welcoming committee on the dock which forced Lake's power cruiser to turn back.

Lake brought in an RCMP riot squad and obtained an ex-parte injunction on picketing. He has hired on children from 12 to 15 as "scab" cutters.

The Burgeo plant workers are getting wide support.

Last week the Newfoundland Federation of Labour at its annual convention planned a co-ordinated campaign of demonstrations, sit-ins and rallies to aid the Burgeo employees. Action has already begun.

About 300 fluorspar miners, members of the St. Lawrence Workers Protective Union, Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU) have been on strike since April 13 against the Aluminum Company of Canada.

Over the past six years, wages have gone up only 60 cents. This time the men want \$1.25 over two years to get parity with Alcan smelter workers in Arvida. The company offered \$1.01 over three years. After 13 weeks of strike the company generously raised their offer to \$1.02.

But safety conditions are also a key issue. Numbers of miners in past years have died from lung cancer and radiation poisoning. In 1969, a provincial royal commission recommended setting up a special fund for widows and dependents. Nothing has yet been done.

At Buchans in central Newfoundland,

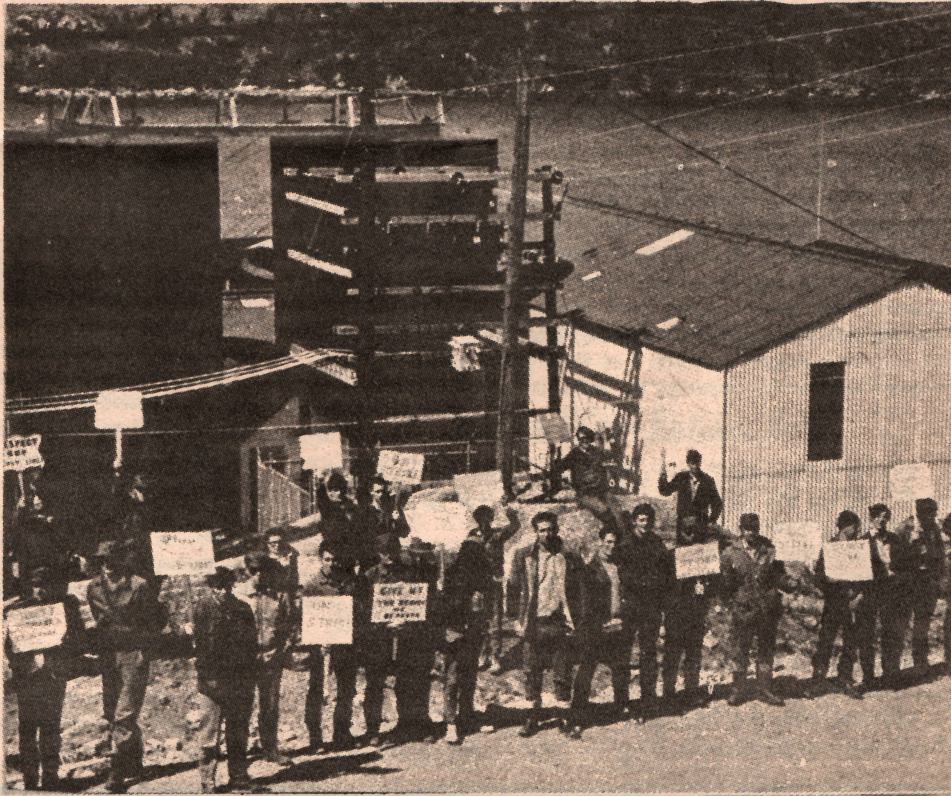
550 base metal workers, members of the United Steelworkers of America, have been out for six weeks against the American Smelting and Refining Company.

200 IBEW electricians are out in St. John's in a jurisdictional dispute against the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association. The association is controlled by Joe Ashley, campaign manager of Joey Smallwood and chief

recipient of government construction patronage.

The IBEW has jurisdiction in the capital but, as most of the new jobs are opening up across the province, wants province-wide jurisdiction. The contractors have so far refused.

Smallwood has been itching to bring in repressive labour legislation. However, this is election year, and he is playing a waiting game.



the poorer areas are not re-invested
 they are returned to their owners in
 the underdeveloped region with little
 economy. The rich regions have the
 industries plus the profits they made
 get richer and the poor get poorer.
 It is a good example of how under-
 wealthy foreign capitalist business
 it wants to invest here. It decides
 here by paying low wages. It then
 United States leaving nothing in the
 wage slaves.

ination of underdevelopment. The
 and a number of "theories" none of
 either capitalism itself might be at
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 There well may be low productivity
 ly is not the fault of the workers.
 ism itself which does not allow the
 ere and how much money should be
 workers in the region and not some
 countries or other richer regions.
 ment occurs because of the system
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 lem. All the talk of "special grants",
 on not only won't work but they
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 lists to pay lower wages and make
 o further underdevelop our region.
 y to solve underdevelopment is to
 ent is made to benefit the people of
 nd not individual capitalists. This
 n and control the industries in the
 to what uses the profits will be put.



and working conditions they are forced to accept. The
 province's policy of "no strings" deals with foreign
 companies grants a lot more freedom to these companies
 than Nova Scotia's working people have seen in a long
 time.

IEL EXPLOITS WORKERS

General Instruments is a typical example of IEL's
 development policies. This already wealthy company
 received a free factory worth a cool \$1 million from
 IEL, 18 acres of free land from the city of Sydney,
 \$75,000 worth of services kicked in by the Atlantic
 Development Board, along with a 10 year tax rate on
 only 1%. (Quite a bit lower than Sydney home owners
 who pay 3.59%)

With all this, and low wages too, General Instruments
 couldn't lose. The set-up looked as profitable as their
 plants in Formosa, Italy and Portugal. And it was.

At its 1967 Convention, the Nova Scotia Federation
 of Labour condemned IEL's policies. The Federation
 passed a resolution calling for a minimum wage of \$1.75
 for both men and women, "to scare away the vultures
 interested only in coolie labour. The delegates to the
 convention agreed, "We don't need jobs at any cost."

But IEL doesn't seem to agree, and General Instru-
 ments has used this to its best advantage. Every talk of
 strike, of better work conditions or wages falls under the
 big shadow of a plant closure.

Even the company bulletin boards remind workers
 that summer is no time to take a day off. Of course, the
 company reserves the right to close down the plant for
 a vacation in the summer if orders are short. No reason
 for them to lose any money by paying the workers. But
 when the company decides to stay open, or to work
 overtime — everyone stays.

"I feel certain that all 590 people would like to take
 time off" says Web MacIsaac, Industrial Relations
 Officer, "but such a situation would close the plant for
 good."

It's the same year round. People work at the con-
 venience of the company. If orders are slack, as they are
 every spring, there are mass layoffs. If there is a short-

age of materials, the line affected is out of work, unless
 other work can be found around the plant.

This all falls under the umbrella of the management's
 right to run the company efficiently — in other words to
 make sure that the company never loses a cent, and that
 the workers pay for any inefficiency on the company's
 part.

"Even things that are in the contract you have to
 fight for like a son of a gun," said one worker. "Not one
 day goes by they don't try to skin you for an extra
 penny."

To keep up efficiency, the company hires an ef-
 ficiency expert, who prowls around the plant with a
 stopwatch to check up on how quickly people are
 working.

BE A SLAVE OR QUIT

They also use a quota system, which sets out a certain
 number of units which must be completed by each
 worker every hour. What happens if the worker fills
 more than her quota — does she get a bonus? Of course
 not, and her quota is increased, with no corresponding
 raise in pay.

In the company's game, you're stuck both ways. If
 you don't work as fast as the others, you're an easy
 target for layoff. Especially since layoffs are made on
 the basis of seniority, ability and efficiency, as decided
 by the company.

On the other hand, if you work really hard, there's
 the off chance of getting a job as a tester or inspector,
 for an extra 7c per hour. But that can be a long time
 coming and not everyone can be a tester.

Efficiency takes many forms at G.I. Like putting up
 a barrier the length of the assembly to prevent workers
 from talking to each other during work. Or immediate
 suspension for acting uppity or "insubordinate", as the
 company rule book states.

It can also mean lots of safety signs, but little safety
 equipment, to protect workers from the flying bits of
 wire which blinded one woman and the paint fumes and
 chemicals which make many of the women sick.

A first aid room with no windows, and no company

doctor are also efficient — because they save money for
 the company.

Must this system remain? No. By militant action and
 a refusal to accept these exploitative conditions, changes
 can be made.

Although the G.I. workers have never struck for
 their own demands, they did walk out for several days
 last year in support of a construction strike.

The same kind of action can be taken at the General
 Instruments plant itself if workers wish to take back
 some of the total control which the company has
 grabbed.

The struggle must be waged in two areas. The bosses
 must be hit in the pocketbook for higher wages — this
 is always their weak spot. The fight must also be over
 control of the conditions on the shop floor — workers
 should decide when the layoffs shall occur (if they are
 necessary), the level of production, safety conditions,
 how much time is needed for coffee breaks or trips to
 the washroom and so on.

At the same time there is a fight to be waged over
 the wider economic and political issues. A set of
 demands must be decided upon to erode the powers
 of government and business as they try to further under-
 develop our province and our region.

LAWS AGAINST BOSSES, NOT WORKERS

Profits must be reinvested in our province and in the
 plant to prevent the rundown of operations and ma-
 chines which is happening at the Trenton Works, for
 example. Strict laws over wages and oppressive working
 conditions must be demanded to ensure that companies
 don't come to our region to drain our workers dry.
 Companies must be forced to sign contracts guaranteeing
 that they will not shut-down their operations at their
 own whims. Industrial "incentives" must be abolished.

All the while we must be building a strong working
 class movement which can throw-out the present rulers
 of this capitalist society and build a socialist society. It
 is such a socialist society which can begin to develop our
 country and our province in the best interests of the
 working class and not the profiteers of today.

In addition to the fact I lost my job for a nosebleed
 In addition to the fact my unemployment insurance
 stamps were just one week short
 In addition to the fact I'm standing in line at the Sally
 Ann for a breakfast of one thin baloneysandwich and
 coffee
 In addition to all that it's lousy coffee.

Milton Acorn is a chunky red-faced Prince Edward Islander who gave up carpentry 15 years ago to devote his fierce energies to the craft of poetry. Today he is Canada's only real revolutionary poet.

Acorn is a revolutionary poet because his work, full of powerful bitterness and love, is written for working people and about their day lives and struggles.

He wants people to put his poems to good practical use. He likes to tell the story of a seacock friend who pasted up one of Acorn's poems right where he works — in a tugboat kitchen.

"And that poem is one of my more complicated ones," says Acorn. "Workers aren't simple or stupid. Don't talk down to them . . . My most receptive and enthusiastic audiences have been workers and children."

You can understand why when you hear poems like this one, about a novice miner killed on the job:



Milton Acorn: workers' poet

Look anywhere:

at buildings bumping on clouds,

at spider-grill bridges:

you'll see no plaque or stone for men killed there;

but on the late shift

the drill I'm bucking bangs his name in code . . .

A Maritimer of 50 years, Acorn has a lot of fighting spirit.

"The Maritimes aren't a backward country. We were the first industrialized area in British North America. Now we have a degenerate ex-capitalist economy."

Acorn points out that at the time of Confederation the Maritimes had the fourth largest fleet in the world. "We spread the phrase 'wooden ships and iron men' to the rest of the world."

Maritimers are still leaving home, but these days it's to find work in Upper Canada. "They don't find much. A lot come back even after ten years. They still feel roots in the East, and only go up for possible jobs."

Easterners have always felt strongly about their region. Acorn remembers when he was a boy that there were strong separatist feelings, but now there is practically no feeling that separatism can solve the Maritimes' problems.

Working people are still being screwed by outside capitalists, he says, but there are other ways to fight back besides separatism. "If a plant is going to be closed down, workers could take it over and keep it going —

for themselves."

Workers have to take direct action because at election time they don't have much of a choice. "All the parties in Canada are conservative," roars Acorn through the cigar in the side of his mouth, "There is the Liberal Party (conservative), the NDP party (conservative), the Social Credit party (super-conservative). The big-C Conservatives are the only ones who are honest enough to admit they are really conservative."

He believes the NDP will never be strong in the East as a whole because they don't work on a grassroots level. "If they really worked with the people they would discover that the only solution to their problems is communism. One of the main things social democrats work against is the spread of communism among working people."

Two years ago when Acorn's book, *I've Tasted My Blood*, failed to win the Governor-General's Award for poetry, his fellow Canadian poets protested by giving him their own prize — a silver medallion naming Milton Acorn as "The People's Poet." It wasn't likely that a boisterous revolutionary poet like Acorn would get an award from the government.

The newest plan of the People's Poet is to write a short biography of Big Jim McLachlan, the Cape Bretoner who led his fellow miners in the militant union struggles of the '20's and '30's. Acorn thinks it's important for workers to rediscover their own history and he wants to help in the task.

"I'm a revolutionary poet, revolutionary short story writer and a revolutionary humourist," declares Acorn.

"I am part of the generation that failed to bring communism to Canada."

With a twinkle in his eye, he adds "It was a work of genius."

If this brain's over-tempered
 consider that the fire was want
 and the hammers were fists.
 I've tasted my blood too much
 to love what I was born to.

My deep prayer a curse
 My deep prayer the promise that this won't be
 My deep prayer my cunning,
 my love, my anger,
 and often even my forgiveness
 that this won't be and be.
 I've tasted my blood too much
 to abide what I was born to.

Trenton

any other comparable industry in the area."

This is a blatant lie, unless of course, Mitchell is comparing his operation to the Stanfield plant in Truro or some similar sweat shop. Pictou County is a "low wage" area in a province already far behind the rest of Canada. Trenton, as the major employer, bears a major responsibility for these depressed wage conditions.

Moreover, workers in other Pictou County plants are moving further and further ahead of the Trenton steelworkers. At Scott Maritimes, a contract signed by Local 440 of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers provides a base rate for labourers of \$3.56 per hour as of June 1, 1971. This is \$1.20 above the present Trenton base rate.

Mitchell also claims that the union demands are "ridiculously high" and "double what the company can afford to pay."

MEN WANT PROOF

This is what Mitchell says. The men on strike want proof. The books of Hawker Siddeley, all the books, must be opened up to the strikers before Mitchell's claims can be believed.

There are some quite obvious holes in his argument. Trenton's major competitor in the railcar industry is the National Steel Car Corporation in Hamilton. Trenton pays much lower wages than National Car.

A union statement of June 9 explained that "the average difference (class 8) in

wages for the past two years has been 62 cents per hour. For tradesmen, the difference is \$1 an hour."

"The Hamilton plant is now in negotiations for a new contract and we here are quite sure they will be moving further away from us, wage-wise."

That contract was signed in late June. It provides for a basic hourly rate of \$3.37. Mitchell's cry of being put in a non-competitive position with National Car has a hollow ring.

MONOPOLY ON AXLES

Trenton doesn't have to remain competitive in their production of axles; other rail car builders in Canada must buy all their axles from Trenton. Any company which has a virtual monopoly can't be in all that shaky a position.

Most of the Trenton railcars produced are sold to leasing agencies. It is these middle-man agencies which sell or lease the cars to the intended customers such as CN or CP.

For example, one major leaser of Trenton Car is Procor Limited of Oakville, Ontario. Procor is owned by Union Tank Car Company of Chicago, Illinois. Cars with the Union Tank Car label "UTLX" on Trenton-built cars can be seen scattered throughout the yard.

UNDER THE TABLE DEALS

Some steelworkers suspect that special contracts have been worked out with the leasing agencies. Profits actually made at the Trenton plant would show up on the books of the leasing agencies such as Procor.

This "bookkeeping trick" would allow Hawker to claim profits were "terrible" at Trenton, while, in fact, they were

making great amounts of money from the leasing agencies.

As a steelworker said, "it's like a farmer claiming he is making no money from a crop of hay. His real profit is being made by feeding the hay to his herd of cattle."

Mitchell is right in one of his claims; productivity (and hence profits) is not what it could be at Trenton. But it is past and present owners, not the workers, who are to blame.

The plant is clearly showing the effects of years of neglect. The Nova Scotia Steel Company, BESCO, DOSCO, A.V. Roe and Hawker Siddeley — for decades and decades, owners of the operation drained profits out and put little back for upkeep and modernization.

Both the machines and the plant are falling apart. Even a visiting Hawker-Siddeley executive from Britain admitted privately several years ago that "these men must be magicians to get productivity out of these rundown machines."

The roof of the railcar shop leaks.

"Some mornings when we come to work after a rainstorm there are puddles all over the floor and the steel is rusted over," said a young welder.

"We usually have to go home and lose a day's pay," he continued.

The old owners and present management have "taken off all the cream," said another steelworker. "They have let our plant run down just like they did up in Sydney."

Production is also lost at Trenton because of heavy lay-offs. Management is incompetent at both getting enough orders and scheduling production in a

planned fashion. Trenton has the heaviest layoffs and recalls of any plant in Atlantic Canada.

In 1970 alone there were 1,006 layoffs and 1320 recalls.

There are three things that can happen at Trenton. One, the company, according to some observers, may pull out. Two, the men could go back to work for a lousy settlement. Three, the men can keep fighting until the company dips into their healthy profits and makes a decent offer.

The first alternative is unlikely. As Charles Wallace said, "we've heard this talk of a pullout for years — and always at negotiation time."

"LITTLE GOLD MINE"

The company has orders on hand for \$10.2 million in railcars alone and plans production valued at \$40 million for 1971. Combined with the low wages that it pays, Hawker Siddeley is not likely to sell out or shut down their little "gold mine" at Trenton.

Some of the men think it's time to end the strike. The company's propaganda campaign has had an effect on them. But, most of the company rumours, like "the cancelled orders" have been exposed. The profits of the company will allow the just union demands to be met.

A meeting called for Monday, August 2 in Trenton may decide where the strike will go from here. Many of the men realize that only militant and determined struggle can bring the giant Hawker empire to the bargaining table with a reasonable offer.



Regan on the prowl.

Bill 1: the Regan offensive

On June 28th of this year the Liberal Government of Gerry Regan introduced the most anti-worker piece of labour legislation on record, to an emergency session of the Nova Scotia Legislature. It was proclaimed a short ten days later (on July 8) to be used to force the construction workers at the Michelin Tire plant at Granton to halt their legitimate strike.

The legislation or Bill 1 as it is called is "An act to provide for the stabilization of labour relations affecting certain construction projects." Essentially it is aimed at controlling "legal strikes, ending picketing, and applying compulsory arbitration.

The most important section of Bill 1 refers to compulsory arbitration.

Every contractor must have a collective agreement signed before it begins work on a major site. If a legal strike occurs on one of these projects, and is not settled after thirty days the workers must go back to work. The dispute must then be submitted to binding arbitration.

After the board makes its inquiry, the decision is reported to both parties and the government. The decision is final and compulsory. It must be put into force within two days.

The following editorial comments on how this law is to be used against the working people of Nova Scotia.

"THE ROBBER BARONS"

At turn of the century United States, a particularly corrupt group known as the "Robber Barons" ruled America. Men such as J.P. Morgan, J.D. Rockefeller and Jay Gould were making millions off stock market manipulation, railways, oil, government patronage and almost every other possible method of exploitation of working people. But then the American working class began to organize into unions and political movements for their own collective protection and betterment. At the height of a particularly violent confrontation over the right to organize, railroad owner Jay Gould proudly announced, "I can buy one half of the working class to shoot the other half."

In many ways, this same strategy is being used today by the Liberal government in its campaign against construction workers through the infamous Bill 1. Not that we should expect industrial workers to shoot their fellow construction workers. The names are changed, but essentially the game's the same — divide and conquer.

The "Robber Barons" of the 1970's are the foreign corporations

such as Michelin Tire of France who will drain millions of dollars off the backs of its workers in Bridgewater and Granton. These imperialist and often heavily taxpayer-subsidized corporations promise thousands of production jobs when the plants open up. But those "nasty" construction workers are delaying the start of production. The construction workers care about things like safe working conditions, toilets and drinking water, pensions and stable employment. Sometimes to enforce their just demands, they fight back through "legal" strikes and wildcats which cut down on profits of Michelin and other corporations.

KEEP THE PROFITS FLOWING

Enter the provincial government, the courts and the press. Their job is to ensure that production is not interrupted and profits flow as easily as possible into the coffers of the corporations.

What tactics are the Liberal government using to try and have this bill accepted by Nova Scotians? There are two parts. First, the government couldn't publicly admit that the bill was an open attack on working people, especially construction workers. Instead, in the past month, the government has filled the provincial press with deliberately misleading tripe about "pressure from the public" and millions of dollars in lost investment. For example, Gerry Regan said in the legislature on June 30 that the legislation was brought in "because our responsibility is to all the people of the province." The legislation could constitute "a giant step towards bringing more projects on which they (trade unionists) can work." Why was the legislation necessary? Regan replied that "the province may have lost hundreds of millions of dollars in potential investment because of labour-management relations."

CRUDE ATTEMPT AT DIVIDE AND CONQUER

This first tactic is a very crude attempt at divide and conquer. Blame the construction workers for the lack of production jobs in Nova Scotia and claim that the floodgates will open up for new jobs when repressive labour legislation is passed.

And what about all that lost investment? It's going to take some time and a lot of our money to make up the millions that were squandered on the heavy water plant in Glace Bay, the Clairtone fiasco, Hustler Corporation, and tens of other disasters. No mention is made of these losses or the financial irresponsibility of the "Michelin deal" where the government gave away \$50 million without any security.

The obvious aim of this entire propaganda campaign is to cast the construction workers in the role of "big bad meanies". It is an attempt to isolate their struggles from those of the industrial and service workers. It hopes to buy off production workers with the promise of "thousands of new jobs". The government can then launch an unobstructed attack on the construction workers.

WHERE WILL GOVERNMENT STRIKE NEXT?

Unless all workers oppose this most obvious anti-working class legislation this attack will be successful. The government is planning a "complete review" of the Trade Union Act; it can't be predicted where they will strike next.

The second part of the strategy is more devious. It involves a slow erosion of trade union rights and powers. The government is now starting to enforce labour laws which have been on the books for many years; this is the government's back-door approach. At the December session of the legislature, the fines for wildcat strikes were increased to \$1,000 per man per day and \$10,000 per union per day. Again, no essential changes in legislation (except for the Construction Industry Panel) but rather putting more bite in existing laws.

Then, the construction workers at the Michelin plants in Granton and Bridgewater were given only light fines for their wildcats of January 29 and February 1 to protest bad toilet facilities.

SLOW EROSIONS ON OUR RIGHTS

As we reported in the first issue of the East Coast Worker, "small fines were just what the attorney general's department had mapped out. Instead of demanding heavy fines which would obviously stir up the labour movement, the department had decided on a strategy of beginning small. Slowly, cases could be built up and slowly erosions made. When the maximum fine of \$1,000 per man and \$10,000 per union was required, the department thinks that the necessary precedents and the lack of labour action will make "the bombshell" easier to drop." (ECW, 1). Finally, under the clauses of Bill 1, the government has outlawed picketing on construction and virtually eliminated "legal" strikes.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the monster of increased ruling class control and repression is engulfing the working class. We must not be complacent. Every victory, however small, by the government and the business class in their struggle against workers is a loss for our side. We must stop the erosion of our hard-won trade union rights, which our brothers of past years so valiantly fought.

WE MUST GO ON OFFENSIVE

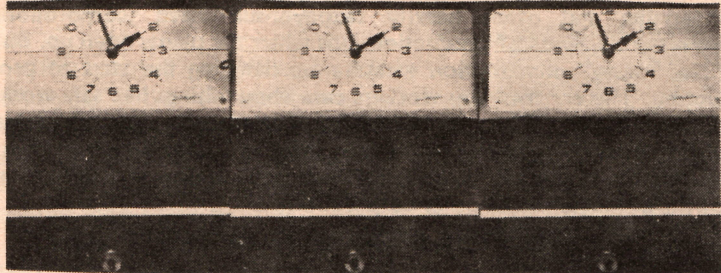
To do this the labour movement must go on the offensive. It cannot sit back and hope for some miracle as it has done to this date.

In the last issue of the East Coast Worker we suggested some of the things that might be done by the labour movement. To begin with it should write up a pamphlet explaining the law and how workers' rights are being destroyed by it. This pamphlet should then be given away free to all workers in the province.

Based on this information unions should be able to win support from their membership for demonstrations against the bill.

If Regan and his government fails to get the message, then a series of rotating strikes would surely do the trick. There are many ways and means of bringing the government to its temporary senses. But it can only happen if labour acts in unity and with force. The point is something has to be done and it has to be done now.

SHOPTALK



SYDNEY POLICE ELIGIBLE TO STRIKE

The Sydney "boys in blue" are eligible to begin a legal strike on August 7 to back demands for wage parity with Dartmouth constables. Dartmouth police now earn a maximum of \$8,100; the top pay for Sydney constables is \$6500 annually. The possible strike by local 758 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees has received the endorsement of the Cape Breton Labor Council. Policemen have the same rights to a living wage as any other group of workers.

HOTEL NOVA SCOTIAN STRIKE — FEW BENEFITS

Employees at the Hotel Nova Scotian were in for a rude shock when they returned to work after their three day strike of early July. Housekeepers discovered that they now had to clean and make-up 21 or 22 rooms instead of the previous 16. Layoffs of up to 5 maids are expected. Shift times were also switched around which means that numbers of women will now lose rides to work and have to take a bus. Both measures have gone a long way to wipe out the minimal benefits of the short strike. Most employees only went up 30 cents and many are still below the federal minimum wage. The Hotel, Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union local in Halifax has no strike fund which makes an effective and militant strike more difficult to pull off. The strike was right at the height of the tourist season and some employees are angry at business agent Gerry Jollimore for telling the strikers to settle after only three days. They feel that if the strike had been continued for another week or two the Nova Scotian would have been forced to come up with a decent settlement rather than their stingy final offer.

POWER WORKERS BREAK OFF TALKS

A Nova Scotia Power Commission offer of 5% the first year and 5% the second was rejected by the IBEW System Council in late July. The union, whose contract expired in June, had been asking for increases of 20% and 15%. In applying for conciliation the union also stated that increased fringe benefits were "negligible."

The NSPC also gave the dirty end of the stick to Sydney local 611 when it recently bought out Caledonia Water and Power. When the Caledonia workers' contract expired last October the NSPC bosses gave them three weeks wages to be applied against their next contract to be negotiated in conjunction with the System Council. The problem is that it will be way into the second year before the wages they were advanced will be covered by the offer made by NSPC.

Finally, the NSPC bosses have refused to negotiate an IBEW demand for wage parity among System members. Workers in Sydney are currently getting a base rate of \$3.46 while Dartmouth workers are getting \$4.05. All the best in fighting for your just demands.

**Take out an
ECW Sub
\$2.00/yr**

The East Coast Worker is published monthly by the East Coast Socialist Movement. It is a socialist newspaper dedicated to recording the daily struggles of the working class and fighting for its just causes. We welcome your articles and ideas (include name, address, and phone number.) Any editing will be done in consultation with the author. Names will be omitted on request.

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Socialism vs. Capitalism

State against the working class

BY STEVE STROPLE

In the first issue we talked about class, how one class, the capitalists, gets rich off another, the working class. This time we want to talk about the state and how it is related to class.

Last time we saw that under the capitalist system it is necessary to have the society divided into two main classes. One class owns the means of production and as a result own the profits of production. However, profits are only possible if first of all you produce goods to sell. To produce goods you need workers. This is the other class in capitalism — the working class.

Workers sell their labour power (their ability to work) to the capitalists for wages. The amount paid to workers is usually just enough to pay for the food, shelter, and clothing and so on which is necessary to keep a worker healthy and strong. It is just enough to buy the things to keep the worker and his family alive.

By using labour power goods are produced. The value of these goods is always more than what the worker is paid. The amount left over after the capitalist sells the goods and pays the workers is profit which goes into the pockets of the capitalist. Without the workers profit would be impossible, but the worker gets few of the benefits he produces. The working class is exploited by the capitalists. The worker does not get any of the extra he produces, the capitalists get it all. The capitalist can live like a king while the working class has to struggle just to get by. This situation produces conflict between the classes. The interests of the capitalists are the opposite of working class interests just as wealth is the opposite of poverty.

CLASS CONFLICT

Class conflict means that the capitalists are always trying to maintain or increase their exploitation of the working class and the working class is always trying to end this exploitation. There is always the possibility that this conflict could erupt into class war. This situation, however, is a threat to smooth production. The capitalists suffer from interrupted production as can be seen from their reaction to strikes. As a result there is a need to hold class conflict in check. In other words it is necessary to prevent the working class from rising up.

Workers from trade unions to fight for a better deal. They organize together to strengthen their bargaining power with the capitalists. But as soon as workers start to do this they come face to face with the organization of the ruling class — the capitalist state. The state is the organization of the ruling class, in this case the capitalists, for the purpose of keeping class conflict under control.

REPRESSION OF STATE

The state exists to look after the day-to-day running of the society. Its purpose is to make the running of the society as smooth as possible. Because we live under a capitalist system this means that the state exists to ensure the smooth running of society for the capitalists — to make sure that capitalists keep on making profits.

Because the state exists to keep class conflict in check it must use repressive means to keep the working class down. And the law is the main way of keeping the workers down. The trade union acts for instance, spell what workers can and cannot do. The law says when a union can be formed and when it can't. It says when workers can go on strike and when they can't. It spells out when arbitration can be used, when injunctions can be granted against workers, and so on.

A good example is the repressive labour legislation brought in by the Regan government to deal with Michelin. This legislation makes it illegal for construction workers who are on strike to picket the job site. It is plain to see whose interests the government is protecting in this legislation and it sure isn't the workers. Laws are made to regulate production to ensure maximum profits. They cannot help but oppose the interests of the workers.

The state is not only made up of government

but also of the police, the courts, and so on which enforce the laws made for capitalists. The courts grant injunctions against the workers, and the police are used to intimidate the workers.

A good example of this is the RCMP being sent into the Sydney Steel plant to "investigate" complaints. Of course in trade union history there are hundreds of examples of the police and the army being used against workers to smash strikes. Police, the courts, and so on are not simply the defenders of impartial laws, they are defenders of the interests of those who make the laws, the capitalists.

PROFITS FOR CAPITALISTS

The state is also involved in the economy both directly and indirectly. Directly the government tries to fight inflation by increasing unemployment and by wage guidelines. But it does not cut back the companies' profits. The government is always trying to run the economy at peak efficiency. This always means efficiency for the capitalists and low wages, unemployment, speed-ups, and few benefits for the workers.

Indirectly the government uses public corporations, commissions, and development agencies. For example, the labour relations board which looks after the trade union act acted against the majority of the fishermen involved in Canso. The labour relations brought in a company union which the fishermen did not want. Whose interests does the board look after — certainly not the workers!

The state also controls class conflict through control of information, over what people think and learn. The education system is but one way of doing this.

Schools teach respect for private property regardless of whether it was bought with the blood and sweat of the workers. They train people to obey rules even if they are wrong. This becomes good training for obeying the rules of the bosses even if they are wrong.

The sons and daughters of working people learn nothing of the struggles that their mothers and fathers fought to obtain basic rights. There is no trade union history in the schools. History in the schools is the history of supposedly great men, princes and kings, generals, businessmen, all of whom could have done nothing without exploiting the working class. Schools also teach that workers are supposed to be stupid, ignorant, and so on.

The mass media is another way of controlling information. The newspapers, radio and T.V. give out only that information which they choose. They also spread the lie that workers and unions are greedy and violent. The Chronicle Herald has always been anti-labour by opposing unions, strikes, and anything else that would allow workers to get ahead in this life. The media shapes people's ideas about the society and in this way keeps them from getting their basic rights.

STATE IS CLASS

The state is involved in all areas of life in the society. The state makes and enforces the rules that society lives by. The state has its origin in the economy but stands above it. It does this in order that it can best organize the society in the best interests of the capitalists.

The government, courts, police, civil service, mass media, education, and even ideas are related to the class structure of our capitalist society. The state is the class structure expanded into all areas of life.

To change the class structure, for workers to end exploitation and gain power means that they have to battle against the whole organization of the society. For the working class to succeed means that they must oppose the total state apparatus. They must break the state and reorganize it to serve the working class instead of the capitalists.